
New battalion uncases colors before first birthday

By Spc. Allison Churchill
Fires Bde. PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – The 589th Brigade Support Battalion, Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, marked both its official recognition as a unit and its first deployment during a small ceremony outside its battalion headquarters Jan. 21.

“A little over 12 months ago, this unit only existed on paper,” said Lt. Col. Barry Diehl, commander, 589th BSB.

Diehl was assigned to lead the unit in February 2005 when the battalion was being form.

“It was a challenge,” admitted Diehl, noting that many key leadership positions were filled by new junior enlisted Soldiers and recently commissioned officers who had little experience.

“There was no instruction manual (on how to build a battalion),” said Maj. Kelly Sandifer, executive officer, 589th BSB. It evolved as the process moved along.

“We focused on one aspect at a time and capitalized on it and what could be offered to the brigade,” she said.

The creation of 589th BSB stems from the transformation of 4th Inf. Div. to the Army’s new modular format. Under that change, Division Artillery became Fires Brigade and several artillery battalions were eliminated, while the BSB, a network support company and a target acquisition battery were all created.

The Fires Brigade stood-up in June, but that historic event does not overshadow the BSB’s uncasing here in Iraq, said Diehl.

“It represents the battalion’s first deployment ever (and) as part of the Army’s first Fires Brigade to deploy into a combat theater,” Diehl told Soldiers.

“It marks a tremendous effort, an effort only accomplished by America’s best, the magnificent Soldiers and leaders and families of this battalion,” Diehl remarked.

The battalion cased its colors Oct. 28, symbolizing it was leaving its home base of Fort Hood, Texas, along with the rest of the 4th Inf. Div.

Diehl took the opportunity of the uncasing to give selected Soldiers their combat patches as another indicator of the BSB’s solidarity with the 4th Inf. Div.

“There is much to be proud of in the organization represented by this patch – the 4th Infantry Division,” said Diehl, “a division rich in history and tradition. A division that only three years ago captured the Ace of Spades – Saddam Hussein.”

He pointed out that all Soldiers wear a patch on their left arm to identify what unit they are part of currently. The combat patch is worn on the right arm to indicate with what unit the Soldier deployed with.

The combat patch, said Diehl, shows they have “done what Soldiers train to do.”

Along with other Soldiers in the BSB, Pfc. Katty Zelaya said she is ready for a year of hard work making the BSB a vital part of the overall 4th Inf. Div. mission

“We started it; we built it,” proudly stated Zelaya, orderly room clerk for Company B, 589th BSB. The battalion is Zelaya’s first duty assignment in the Army.